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FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT

ILLINOIS

Federal Aid Project No. W-99-R-4

Study XV: Wildlife Harvests

Job No. 2: Fur Harvest Survey, 1991-92

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16 December 1992

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Study XV - Job No. 2

JOB COMPLETION REPORT

SURVEYS AND INVESTIGATIONS PROJECTS

STATE OF ILLINOIS, PROJECT W-99-R-4, STUDY XV: Wildlife Harvests

JOB NO. 2: Fur Harvest Survey, 1991-92

SUMMARY: The Illinois Department of Conservation (IDOC) issued 200 licenses to 198 fur buyers (194 residents; 4 non-residents) during 1991-92, a 44.5% increase from 1990-91. The number of trapping licenses issued during 1991-92 (2,952; 1 July 1992 estimate) decreased <1% from 1990-91 (2,979). A preliminary estimate indicated that the number of raccoon (Procyon lotor) hunters increased 7.9% to 22,000.

Reports required of all licensed fur buyers were used to estimate the harvest and its value to fur-takers during the 1991-92 season. Based on a 99.0% response, the total harvest of the 10 open-season furbearers was estimated at 259,429 pelts, an increase of 99.6% from 1990-91. Total value of the harvest increased 322.7% to \$1,465,624.20.

Raccoons and muskrats (Ondatra zibethicus) accounted for 90.2% of the total harvest and 83.9% of its value. Pelt sales increased for all species except weasels (Mustela frenata, M. nivalis). The most notable increases occurred for raccoon (+146%), mink (Mustela vison)(+56%), opossum (Didelphis marsupialis)(+118%) and coyote (Canis latrans)(+140%). Increased pelt prices were probably responsible for greater harvest effort and total harvest compared to the 1990-91 season.

The following table summarizes the 1991-92 statewide harvest:

Species	Number of pelts sold	Average pelt value (\$)	Total value (\$)
Muskrat	59,510	1.75	104,142.50
Mink	5,201	19.35	100,639.35
Raccoon	174,452	6.45	1,125,215.40
Opossum	6,758	1.05	7,095.90
Red fox	2,848	12.90	36,739.20
Gray fox	778	8.20	6,379.60
Beaver	2,533	3.85	9,752.05
Striped Skunk	128	1.65	211.20
Weasel	1	-	-
Coyote	7,220	10.45	75,449.00
Total or mean	259,429	5.65	1,465,624.20

JOB COMPLETION REPORT
SURVEYS AND INVESTIGATIONS PROJECTS
STATE OF ILLINOIS, PROJECT W-99-R-4, STUDY XV: Wildlife Harvests
JOB NO. 2: Fur Harvest Survey, 1991-92

OBJECTIVE: To collect information about the annual harvest of all open-season furbearers in Illinois and its economic value to fur-takers.

PROCEDURES: Numbers of wild fur pelts taken in Illinois and sold by fur-takers during the 1991-92 season were estimated from fur purchase reports required of all fur buyers licensed by IDOC (Fig. 1). Approximately 15 days before the muskrat trapping season opened, we mailed fur purchase report forms and written instructions to maintain records of transactions throughout the season to all buyers. The reports of raw furs purchased were to be submitted no later than 20 March 1992. Buyers who failed to report by that date were sent a reminder notice by 1st class mail on 17 April 1992. Buyers who failed to respond to the reminder by 12 May 1992 were sent a second request by certified mail.

Only original pelt sales were used to avoid duplication. We corrected for out-of-state pelt sales, which varied from 0-34.8% for individual species and averaged 11.4% for all species combined (Anderson, unpublished data). Average pelt prices for all sizes and grades were estimated from price data supplied by representative buyers during and after the open seasons.

We used sales by the License and Permit Office, IDOC, to estimate numbers of fur buyer permittees and licensed trappers. Fur hunting pressure was estimated from the number of raccoon, red fox (Vulpes vulpes), and coyote hunters in the post-season hunter harvest survey, Federal Aid Project W-99-R-4, Study XV, Job No. 1.

Information about the history of muskrat harvest regulations was obtained from official IDOC files. These records were supplemented by a review of the Illinois Revised Statutes and Laws at the University of Illinois library. In addition, pertinent IDOC publications were examined.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:

1991-92 Fur Seasons

The 1991-92 fur-bearing mammal seasons varied from 47 to 365 days in length (Table 1); most were 8-15 days greater than in 1990-91. Seasons were extended because of high furbearer populations, low harvests during recent seasons, and a desire to increase recreational opportunities. Trapping seasons for all species except beaver (Castor canadensis), red fox, gray fox (Urocyon cinereoargenteus), and coyote lasted 60 days. Opening dates in the northern and southern management zones (Fig. 2) were 5 November 1991 and 18 November 1991, respectively.

Red fox, gray fox, and coyote could be trapped legally for 47 days in the northern zone and 60 days in the southern zone starting 18 November 1991. The beaver trapping season opened simultaneously with that for all other species except fox and coyote and closed on 31 March 1992. Trappers could harvest beaver legally for 148 days in the northern zone and 135 days in the southern zone.

Seasons for hunting raccoon and opossum lasted 70 days in the northern zone and 67 days in the southern zone; opening dates varied by zone. Statewide hunting seasons lasted 71 days for red and gray fox, 360 days for striped skunk (Mephitis mephitis), and 365 days for coyote. No bag limits were in force for any furbearer.

Weather Conditions During the 1991-92 Season

The first week of the fur harvest season in the northern zone was cold, with readings in the single digits to the mid-teens on 8 and 9 November. Below-zero temperatures occurred in portions of northwestern Illinois on the 7th. About 1-4 inches of snow fell on the 6th and 7th. Temperatures during the first 15 days of November averaged from the upper 30's to low 40's, which was 10-14 degrees (F) below normal. Lows averaged in the low to mid-20's, which was 7-11 degrees below normal. Precipitation totals averaged from 1.2-2.0 inches, which was wetter than normal. Conditions for trapping, raccoon hunting and opossum hunting were poor in the northern zone during the first half of November. Temperatures moderated by mid-November, with above-normal readings during the second half of the month. Overall, temperatures were below normal and precipitation was above-normal during the month of November.

During the first week of December, below-zero temperatures and 3-14 inches of snow occurred in some areas of the north. Temperatures then moderated, averaging 1-5 degrees above-normal for the first half of the month. Overall, highs averaged in the upper 30's to mid-40's across the northern part of the state, and upper 40's to mid-50's in the southern part. Average lows during the first half of December were mostly in the 20's north and 30's south. Precipitation from 1-15 December generally totalled 1-2 inches, a little drier in the northwest,

and much wetter in the extreme south, with some locations receiving as much as 3 inches of rain. Conditions during the latter part of November and first part of December were generally good for water trapping and raccoon hunting, fair for land trapping, and poor for canid hunting.

Mild temperatures continued into the second half of December. Average temperatures for the entire month of December were above-normal; precipitation was slightly below-normal. Conditions for the month of December can be summarized as fair to excellent for water trapping and raccoon hunting, fair for land trapping, and fair to poor for canid hunting.

Average highs for the first half of January were in the mid-30's to mid-40's, with average lows in the mid-20's to upper 30's. Daily extremes ranged from highs in the 40's and 50's to lows as cold as zero to 12 below zero on the night of the 15th and morning of the 16th. Precipitation ranged from below-normal in northern Illinois to above-normal in the south. Above-average temperatures occurred during the second half of the month. The average temperature for the entire month of January was 7 degrees above normal; average precipitation was 1.15 inches below normal. Conditions during January were generally good to excellent for water trapping and raccoon hunting, fair for land trapping, and poor to fair for canid hunting. Above-average temperatures and below-normal precipitation provided good to excellent conditions for beaver trapping during February and March.

Overall, weather conditions during 1991-92 were good to excellent for water trapping, raccoon hunting, and opossum hunting. Mild temperatures and advances in raccoon pelt prices as the season progressed probably encouraged more harvest effort for this species than would normally occur toward the end of the season. Conditions for canid hunting were generally poor in the northern part of the state because of below-normal snowfall. Fluctuating temperatures probably hampered canid trapping during the latter part of the season.

Trends in Fur License Sales

Records of fur buyer permits sold by the License and Permit Office, IDOC, for 1991-92 were compiled prior to mailing out fur purchase report forms and instructions. A total of 198 individuals purchased 200 fur buyer permits during 1991-92. This represented a 44.5% increase from 1990-91 in the number of persons licensed. Part of the increase can be attributed to a greater number of locker plants purchasing fur buyer permits to purchase, receive or possess deer hides while processing venison. Of the 198 buyers, 194 were residents and 4 were non-residents. The 194 residents bought 196 permits (Table 2).

The Department issued 2,952 trapping licenses (2,950 resident, 2 non-resident, 1 July 1992 estimate) for the 1991-92 season, down <1% from 1990-91 (2,979 licenses). Preliminary estimates indicated that the number of raccoon hunters increased 7.9% from 20,379 in 1990-91 (Anderson and Campbell 1991) to 22,000 in 1991-92 (Anderson, unpublished data). About 5,700 hunters pursued opossums during 1991-92, down 5.2% from the previous season (Anderson, unpublished data). As in earlier seasons, a majority of night hunters were in the

northern, western, and southern management units (Fig. 3). This was expected because these units contain more forested acres than the central and east-central units.

Preliminary figures indicated that the number of red fox hunters decreased 21% to an estimated 6,900 (Anderson, unpublished data). The number of coyote hunters increased 5.0% to 36,000 (Anderson, unpublished data). Changes in estimates of the numbers of fur hunters were within those expected from sampling variation, although a real decline in the number of red fox hunters might have occurred.

Fur Buyer Fur Purchase Survey

Reports of raw furs purchased were submitted by 196 of the 198 individual fur buyers (99.0%) when the survey was closed out on 15 July 1991. Thirty-eight permittees reported that they did not buy any pelts during the 1991-92 season; 62 purchased/received deer hides or capes only. The two buyers who failed to report were assumed to have purchased raw furs at the same rate as the buyers who submitted records of their activities.

An estimated 259,429 pelts of fur-bearing mammals were harvested and sold by Illinois fur-takers during the 1991-92 season (Table 3). This estimate included adjustment factors (by species) to account for out-of-state pelt sales (Anderson, unpublished data). No allowance was made for pelts harvested by hunters and trappers that were not sold.

The total number of pelts harvested and sold during 1991-92 increased 99.6% from the previous season. The most notable increases occurred for raccoon (+146%), mink (+56%), opossum (+118%), and coyote (+140%). Higher average pelt prices were probably responsible for greater harvest efforts and harvests, but longer seasons and earlier starting dates might have played a part. Numbers of fur hunters and trappers remained relatively stable between 1990-91 and 1991-92. Therefore, greater harvests during 1991-92 probably resulted from an increase in individual harvest efforts and/or the percentage of licensees who were active.

Pelts harvested during the 1991-92 season brought \$1,425,624.20 to Illinois fur-takers. This represented a 322.7% increase from the previous season (Table 4). Raccoons and muskrats accounted for 90.2% of the total harvest and 83.9% of its value.

Trend data indicated that most furbearer populations were stable or increased during 1990-91. Hubert (unpublished data) reported a record number of raccoons sighted during the 1991 statewide spring spotlight census. The 24.4% increase from 1990 to 1991 was significant, and indicated that the population was higher than the previous year, during which a significant increase also occurred. Populations were stable from 1981 through 1989.

The percentage of firearm deer hunters who observed coyotes during the 1991 season decreased 2.1% in the northern zone, 0.7% in the southern zone, and 1.3% statewide (Hubert, unpublished data). Changes >1% are considered significant, indicating that the statewide

coyote population declined, especially in the northern management zone. The beaver population was stable or increased slightly. Although the number of Nuisance Animal Removal Permits issued for beaver decreased 15% from 1990 to 1991, a greater number of complaints were handled by Commercial Nuisance Wildlife Control Permittees, who removed 580 beavers during 1991, up 158% from 1990.

The annual adjusted road-kill index for opossum decreased 7.8% during 1991 (Hubert, unpublished data). An increase in harvest levels probably resulted from relatively high populations and an increase in pelt value. Greater harvest effort by raccoon and canid trappers might have contributed to the increased take of opossums because opossums are often captured incidentally in sets targeted for other species. Hunters sometimes harvest opossums opportunistically while targeting other species, especially raccoon.

The unadjusted annual road-kill index for striped skunks decreased 11.8% between 1990 and 1991 (Hubert, unpublished data). This decrease was not reflected in the number of pelts sold, which increased from 49 in 1990-91 to 128 in 1991-92. Traditionally, few skunks are marketed by hunters and trappers because of disease concerns, consistently low pelt value, and the unpleasant odor associated with this species. Likewise, the change in the annual weasel harvest was not meaningful. Only a small number of weasels are trapped annually, and most of these are taken incidentally to trapping activity associated with more abundant species.

Red and gray fox harvests increased by 19.4% and 152.6%, respectively, but remained well below the 17-year averages. At present, population trend data for these species are non-existent except for harvest information. Increased harvests were more likely caused by higher pelt prices and greater harvest effort than a change in fox numbers. Higher prices paid for coyote pelts might have contributed to an increase in the numbers of fox harvested because fox are often taken incidentally to coyote hunting and trapping efforts. More accurate means of monitoring red fox populations might result from a cooperative study initiated by IDOC and the Illinois Natural History Survey during 1991. The study will evaluate 3 techniques for censusing numbers of red fox.

The muskrat harvest increased by 33.4% from the previous year. Much of the increase can be attributed to greater harvest effort associated with higher pelt prices. Mink remained an attractive target compared to other furbearers because the average price paid for mink pelts (\$19.35) was much greater than that paid for all species combined (\$5.65). The 1991-92 mink harvest (5,201 pelts) remained well below the 17-year average (14,779 pelts), probably because of the low number of active trappers.

Total value of the 1991-92 fur harvest was \$1,465,624.20, 322.7% greater than the previous season. This change was caused by an increase in the total harvest (+99.6%) and average prices paid for pelts (+113.2%). After a period of greatly inflated pelt prices during the late 1970's, market values for most North American wild furs have dropped to more realistic levels. Although the prices being paid for raw furs are much lower than they were

a few years ago, such prices are certainly not unusual when viewed from an historical perspective.

Distribution of Harvest Among Fur-takers

The distribution of the fur harvest among resource users is traditionally a source of controversy between hunters and trappers. Also, this aspect of the annual harvest is potentially important in the establishment of sound regulations and the evaluation of management programs. The present survey requested licensed fur buyers to estimate the portion of pelts purchased from hunters for the six furbearers that could be legally harvested by hunting and trapping methods.

Percentage of the total harvest taken by hunters for species which could be hunted or trapped ranged from 1.0% for striped skunk to 75.4% for coyote (Table 5). By applying estimates from furhouse investigations (Sanderson 1991) and fur buyer estimates for canids, opossums, and skunks to the 1991-92 harvest figures, the number of pelts taken by hunters was estimated to be 151,739 or approximately 58.5% of the total harvest. As stated earlier, there were an estimated 22,000 raccoon hunters and 2,952 trappers during the 1991-92 season. Excluding fox hunters, coyote hunters, opossum hunters, and canid chasers, hunters made up 88.2% of all Illinois fur-takers. They accounted for 58.5% of the total harvest and 67.9% of its value.

The average fur hunter sold 6.9 pelts valued at \$38.99 compared with the average trapper who sold 36.5 pelts worth \$206.23. The distribution of harvest emphasizes the greater efficiency of trappers as well as the higher monetary rewards of trapping. The 1991-92 distribution values are similar to previous seasons (Hubert 1986, 1987a, 1988, 1989, Bluett and Hubert 1990, 1991).

1975-1991 Fur Harvest Trends

Statewide furbearer harvest trend data for 1975 through 1991 are presented in Tables 5 through 10. During the 17-year period, total estimated pelt harvests (based on fur buyer surveys) ranged from 129,997 in 1990-91 to 948,392 in 1979-80. The average annual harvest during the past 17 seasons was 573,493 pelts valued at \$6,082,833.25. No allowances for out-of-state pelt sales were made in 1975 or 1976. Out-of-state sales adjustments for the 10 years from 1976 through 1986 averaged 4.6% (Hubert 1987b), but increased to 11.4% during the 1991-92 season (Anderson, unpublished data). Since 1975, the harvests of most species have undergone major fluctuations.

Deer Hide Purchases

Licensed fur buyers also reported the number of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) hides that they purchased from hunters. An estimated 24,138 deer hides (23.8% of the total harvest) were sold to fur buyers during the 1991-92 season. The average price per hide was

\$2.50; the total value to hunters was \$60,345. It is likely that a portion of the unsold skins were retained for personal use rather than discarded. Purchases totalled 7,795 hides in 1987 (Hubert 1988), 16,521 in 1988 (Hubert 1989), 19,091 in 1989 (Bluett and Hubert 1990), and 10,451 in 1990 (Bluett and Hubert 1991).

History of Muskrat Harvest Regulations

The muskrat was first afforded protection by state statute in 1915 (Table 11). The first restricted harvest season was held from 1 November 1915 through 31 March 1916. Hunting was a legal method of taking muskrats from 1915-16 until 1929-30. Harvest seasons have ranged from 30 to 152 days in length. Overall, muskrat harvest regulations have been relatively conservative since the late 1930's.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation provides the only source of harvest and value data for all 10 open season species of furbearers. The information serves as a base for assessment of population trends and regulatory management. The fur harvest survey should be continued.

During 1991-92, harvests of red fox, gray fox, opossum, mink, muskrat, striped skunk, and weasel remained less than one half of their respective 17-year means. The beaver harvest was 41% below its 17-year mean, and the raccoon harvest was 27% below its long-term average. The 1991-92 coyote harvest exceeded its 17-year mean by 6%.

Based on population indices and past harvests, we did not recommend any major changes for the 1992-93 fur-bearing mammal seasons. Starting dates earlier than those set for 1991-92 would promote the harvest of unmarketable furs. Closing dates later than those set for 1991-92 might be acceptable from the aspect of fur primeness (for some species), but such extensions would have little effect on the total harvest because relatively few hunters and trappers pursue furbearers late in the season.

The current due date for fur buyer reports (20 March) occurs before the end of the beaver season (31 March) and before the time limit established for possession of green beaver hides by trappers (10 days after the close of the beaver season; i.e., 10 February). This conflict causes submission of incomplete or inaccurate data and complicates the interpretation of biological information needed for management purposes. Conflicts among reporting, permit expiration, harvest season, and possession dates force fur buyers to break the law if they wish to purchase beaver pelts until 10 days after the close of the trapping season. We recommend that the Department pursue statutory changes needed to extend the due date for fur buyer reports from 20 March to 20 April and expiration date for fur buyer permits from 31 March to 30 April.

Recommendations for the 1993-94 season will be made using information about furbearer population levels, harvest levels, and harvest effort as this information becomes available. If

population levels are stable and harvest levels remain below the 17-year means for major species, season frameworks will be similar to those for 1992-93. Otherwise, adjustments may be necessary.

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DATA AND REPORTS:

Original and related reports in this investigation are on file in the Division of Wildlife Resources office, IDOC, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

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Table 1. Illinois fur-bearing mammal seasons for 1991-92.

Species	Hunting Seasons ^a		Trapping seasons	
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Northern zone	Southern zone
Muskrat, Mink, Weasel	Closed	Closed	5 Nov - 3 Jan	18 Nov - 16 Jan
Beaver	Closed	Closed	5 Nov - 31 Mar ^b	18 Nov - 31 Mar
Raccoon, opossum	5 Nov - 18 Jan	18 Nov - 26 Jan	5 Nov - 3 Jan	18 Nov - 16 Jan
Red fox, gray fox	18 Nov - 31 Jan	18 Nov - 31 Jan	18 Nov - 3 Jan	18 Nov - 16 Jan
Striped skunk	Continuous open season		5 Nov - 3 Jan	18 Nov - 16 Jan
Coyote	Continuous open season		18 Nov - 3 Jan	18 Nov - 16 Jan

^a Raccoon, opossum, and striped skunk hunting closed 24 hrs on 15 and 16 Nov and 12, 13, and 14 Dec and until 6PM on 17 Nov and 15 Dec during firearms deer season. Red fox and gray fox hunting closed 24 hrs on 12, 13, and 14 Dec and until 6PM on 15 Dec during firearms deer season. Coyote hunting closed 24 hrs on 15 and 16 Nov and 12, 13, and 14 Dec and until 6PM on 17 Nov and 15 Dec during firearms deer season except to those individuals possessing unfilled firearm deer permits.

^b Those portions of Carroll, Whiteside, and Rock Island counties lying west of Illinois Rt. 84 from Interstate-80 north to the JoDaviess county line were open to beaver trapping from 5 Nov 1991 - 3 Jan 1992 only.

Table 2. Composition of estimated fur harvest in Illinois and value to fur-takers during 1991-92 season.

Species	Total pelts ^a		Total value	
	Number	Percent	Dollars	Percent
Muskrat	59,510	22.94	104,142.50	7.11
Mink	5,201	2.00	100,639.35	6.87
Raccoon	174,452	67.24	1,125,215.40	76.77
Opossum	6,758	2.60	7,095.90	0.48
Red fox	2,848	1.10	36,739.20	2.51
Gray fox	778	0.30	6,379.60	0.44
Beaver	2,533	0.98	9,752.05	0.66
Striped skunk	128	0.05	211.20	0.01
Weasel	1	<0.01	-	-
Coyote	7,220	2.78	75,449.00	5.15
Totals	259,429	99.99	1,465,624.20	100.00

^a Includes allowances for out-of-state pelt sales.

Table 3. Comparative fur harvest data for Illinois, 1990-91 vs. 1991-92.

Species	Number of pelts taken ^a		Change in harvest from 1990-91 ^b	Average price per pelt (dollars)		Total value to fur-takers (dollars)		Change in value from 1990-91 (dollars)
	1990-91	1991-92		1990-91	1991-92	1990-91	1991-92	
Muskrat	44,624	59,510	+14,886 (+33.4)	0.95	1.75	42,392.80	104,142.50	+61,749.70 (+145.7)
Mink	3,358	5,201	+1,843 (+54.9)	15.85	19.35	53,224.30	100,639.35	+47,415.05 (+89.1)
Raccoon	70,845	174,452	+103,607 (+146.2)	2.95	6.45	208,992.75	1,125,215.40	+916,222.65 (+438.4)
Opossum	3,097	6,758	+3,661 (+118.2)	0.70	1.05	2,167.90	7,095.90	+4,928.00 (+227.3)
Red fox	2,386	2,848	+462 (+19.4)	6.25	12.90	14,912.50	36,739.20	+21,826.70 (+146.4)
Gray fox	308	778	+470 (+152.6)	3.45	8.20	1,062.60	6,379.60	+5,317.00 (+500.3)
Beaver	2,315	2,533	+218 (+9.4)	5.00	3.85	11,575.00	9,752.05	-1,822.95 (-15.7)
Striped skunk	49	128	+79 (+161.2)	1.95	1.65	95.55	211.20	+115.65 (+121.0)
Weasel	5	1	-4 (-80.0)	0.50	-	2.50	-	-2.50 (-100.0)
Coyote	3,010	7,220	+4,210 (+139.9)	4.10	10.45	12,341.00	75,449.00	+63,108.00 (+511.4)
Totals	129,997	259,429	+129,432 (+99.6)	$\bar{x} = 2.65$	$\bar{x} = 5.65$	346,766.90	1,465,624.20	+1,118,857.30 (+322.7)

^a Includes allowances (by species) for out-of-state pelt sales (Anderson, unpublished data).^b Numbers in parentheses indicate percent change between years.

Table 4. Estimated percentage of annual harvest taken by hunters for selected furbearers in Illinois, 1991-92.

Species	Estimated percentage of harvest taken by hunters	
	Furhouse studies ^a	Fur buyer estimates ^b
Raccoon	81.9	62.8
Opossum	-	32.2
Red fox	-	34.8
Gray fox	-	32.3
Striped skunk	-	1.0
Coyote	-	75.4

^a Hubert (unpublished data), Sanderson 1991.

^b Based on present study.

Table 5. Muskrat, mink, and weasel trapping seasons, harvest, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1991.

Year	Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest			Average price per pelt (dollars)		
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Muskrat	Mink	Weasel	Muskrat	Mink	Weasel
1975	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	445,737	18,009	181	2.90	6.00	0.50
1976	13 Nov (55)	20 Nov (55)	256,315	14,253	311	4.44	13.95	0.54
1977	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	300,314	12,910	147	5.10	13.20	0.60
1978	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	422,354	19,814	147	5.00	15.20	0.65
1979	10 Nov (30)	20 Nov (30)	460,674	22,971	145	6.35	20.15	0.50
1980	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	421,585	26,607	85	6.50	18.90	0.60
1981	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	325,415	24,478	53	4.30	17.45	0.50
1982	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	297,872	17,768	74	2.75	13.90	0.50
1983	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	248,146	16,056	60	3.15	15.15	0.65
1984	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	225,629	18,068	37	3.55	16.60	0.55
1985	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	170,025	10,021	22	2.50	14.70	0.45
1986	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	360,499	18,391	39	3.70	21.05	0.55
1987	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	297,737	14,009	37	4.00	23.05	0.80
1988	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	115,125	6,155	10	2.40	23.60	0.60
1989	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	67,103	3,169	4	1.15	17.85	0.55
1990	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	44,624	3,358	5	0.95	15.85	0.50
1991	5 Nov (60)	18 Nov (60)	59,510	5,201	1	1.75	19.35	-
17-year Averages			265,804	14,779	80	3.56	16.82	0.53

Table 6. Beaver trapping seasons, harvest, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1991.

Year	Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest	Average price per pelt (dollars)
	Northern zone	Southern zone		
1975	6 Dec (85)	6 Dec (85)	2,337	4.50
1976	18 Dec (80)	18 Dec (80)	1,548	7.00
1977	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	2,425	6.60
1978	15 Nov (90)	25 Nov (90)	3,386	7.25
1979	10 Nov (111)	20 Nov (101)	7,345	14.40
1980	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	7,338	10.60
1981	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	4,145	6.40
1982	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	2,517	4.95
1983	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	2,742	5.45
1984	13 Nov (108)	25 Nov (96)	3,683	6.80
1985	13 Nov (108)	25 Nov (96)	3,857	9.45
1986	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	8,960	12.40
1987	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	8,314	10.50
1988	15 Nov (106)	25 Nov (96)	5,241	7.80
1989	15 Nov (121)	25 Nov (111)	3,887	7.00
1990	13 Nov (139)	25 Nov (127)	2,315	5.00
1991	5 Nov (148)	18 Nov (135)	2,533	3.85
17-year Averages			4,269	7.64

Table 7. Raccoon and opossum hunting and trapping seasons, harvest, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1991.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a		Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest		Average price per pelt (dollars)	
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Northern zone	Southern zone	Raccoon	Opossum	Raccoon	Opossum
1975	8 Nov (63)	15 Nov (64)	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	310,593	49,874	14.00	1.10
1976	13 Nov (54)	13 Nov (64)	13 Nov (55)	20 Nov (55)	187,377	42,153	17.17	1.21
1977	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	237,315	46,198	18.00	2.05
1978	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	292,728	25,097	27.25	2.65
1979	10 Nov (34)	20 Nov (37)	10 Nov (30)	20 Nov (30)	381,006	38,626	25.20	3.35
1980	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	314,777	46,710	19.40	1.45
1981	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	314,963	55,729	22.50	1.05
1982	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	292,189	35,548	14.55	0.95
1983	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	203,633	22,289	13.15	0.85
1984	13 Nov (58)	25 Nov (58)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	269,991	28,204	17.25	0.95
1985	13 Nov (58)	25 Nov (58)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	206,278	17,633	13.80	0.95
1986	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	306,261	38,502	18.95	1.15
1987	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	261,418	35,749	14.10	1.00
1988	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	137,807	8,137	6.40	0.80
1989	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	83,284	2,441	4.00	0.50
1990	13 Nov (58)	25 Nov (58)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	70,845	3,097	2.95	0.70
1991	5 Nov (70)	18 Nov (67)	5 Nov (60)	18 Nov (60)	174,452	6,758	6.45	1.05
17-year Averages					237,936	29,573	15.01	1.28

^a Hunting season closed during firearms deer season.

Table 8. Red and gray fox hunting and trapping seasons, harvest, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1991.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a		Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest		Average price per pelt (dollars)	
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Northern zone	Southern zone	Red fox	Gray fox	Red fox	Gray fox
1975	8 Nov (63)	15 Nov (64)	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	11,247	7,132	34.00	16.00
1976	20 Dec (45)	17 Nov (52)	27 Nov (41)	4 Dec (41)	7,206	6,166	45.61	27.67
1977	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,715	9,086	47.45	31.05
1978	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	13,582	9,525	61.50	42.95
1979	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	14,136	10,547	48.40	43.80
1980	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	13,965	8,716	44.80	36.40
1981	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	13,533	7,649	46.75	28.75
1982	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,780	5,943	30.40	26.35
1983	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (60)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	8,719	4,152	30.90	27.35
1984	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	8,835	3,902	27.20	24.10
1985	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	6,240	2,757	17.55	16.15
1986	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	8,531	2,915	22.15	23.40
1987	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	7,939	2,944	16.75	25.05
1988	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	4,671	1,585	11.45	11.70
1989	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	2,716	556	9.60	5.85
1990	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (65)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	2,386	308	6.25	3.45
1991	18 Nov (71)	18 Nov (71)	18 Nov (47)	18 Nov (60)	2,848	778	12.90	8.20
17-year Averages					8,591	4,980	30.21	23.42

^a Hunting season closed during firearms deer season.

Table 9. Striped skunk hunting and trapping seasons, harvests, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1991.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a		Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest	Average price per pelt (dollars)
	Northern zone	Southern zone	Northern zone	Southern zone		
1975	8 Nov (63)	15 Nov (64)	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	-	1.00
1976	Closed	Closed	13 Nov (55)	20 Nov (55)	821	2.25
1977	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	1,503	2.20
1978	15 Nov (60)	25 Nov (60)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	1,633	2.55
1979	10 Nov (34)	20 Nov (37)	10 Nov (30)	20 Nov (30)	3,111	2.60
1980	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	1,625	2.00
1981	15 Nov (56)	25 Nov (58)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	840	2.15
1982	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	341	1.50
1983	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	137	1.55
1984	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	232	1.05
1985	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	358	2.50
1986	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	119	1.85
1987	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	233	1.40
1988	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	176	2.10
1989	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	15 Nov (45)	25 Nov (45)	55	1.95
1990	Continuous (361)	Continuous (361)	13 Nov (47)	25 Nov (45)	49	1.95
1991	Continuous (360)	Continuous (360)	5 Nov (60)	18 Nov (60)	128	1.65
16-year Averages					710	1.90

^a Hunting season closed during firearms deer season.

Table 10. Coyote hunting and trapping seasons, harvests, and pelt price data for Illinois, 1975-1991.

Year	Hunting season opening date (season length in days) ^a	Trapping season opening date (season length in days)		Estimated harvest	Average price per pelt (dollars)
	Statewide	Northern zone	Southern zone		
1975	1 Sep (175)	8 Nov (69)	15 Nov (70)	2,833	8.00
1976	1 Sep (175)	27 Nov (41)	4 Dec (41)	3,882	16.07
1977	1 Sep (175)	1 Sep (45) ^b 30 Nov (30)	1 Sep (45) ^b 30 Nov (30)	7,678	16.75
1978	1 Sep (175)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,891	31.35
1979	Continuous (359)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	9,831	22.85
1980	Continuous (359)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	8,412	19.25
1981	Continuous (359)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	10,390	24.45
1982	Continuous (359)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	8,180	13.85
1983	Continuous (359)	30 Nov (30)	30 Nov (30)	7,289	9.40
1984	Continuous (359)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (35)	6,847	8.30
1985	Continuous (365)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	6,347	9.25
1986	Continuous (365)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	9,167	13.70
1987	Continuous (365)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	9,652	9.35
1988	Continuous (365)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	3,513	3.50
1989	Continuous (365)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	1,489	3.05
1990	Continuous (365)	25 Nov (35)	25 Nov (45)	3,010	4.10
1991	Continuous (365)	18 Nov (47)	18 Nov (60)	7,220	10.45
17-year Averages				6,801	13.16

^a Hunting season closed during firearms deer season except from 1985 through 1991 when holders of unfilled firearm deer permits could harvest coyotes.

^b Split trapping season; season total length = 75 days.

Table 11. Muskrat harvest regulations in Illinois, 1915-1991.

Season	Zone ^a	Season dates	Season length (days)	Special Regulations
1915-16	Statewide	1 Nov - 31 Mar	152	Hunting permitted
1916-17 through 1918-19	Statewide	1 Nov - 31 Mar	151	Hunting permitted
1919-20	Statewide	1 Nov - 15 Mar	136	Hunting permitted
1920-21 through 1922-23	Statewide	1 Nov - 15 Mar	135	Hunting permitted
1923-24	Northern Central Southern	1 Nov - 31 Mar 15 Nov - 15 Mar 15 Nov - 1 Mar	152 122 107	Hunting permitted
1924-25	Northern Central Southern	1 Nov - 31 Mar 15 Nov - 15 Mar 15 Nov - 1 Mar	151 121 107	Hunting permitted
1925-26 through 1926-27	Northern Central Southern	1 Nov - 1 Mar 15 Nov - 1 Mar 15 Nov - 15 Feb	121 107 93	Hunting permitted
1927-28	Northern Central Southern	1 Nov - 1 Mar 15 Nov - 1 Mar 15 Nov - 15 Feb	122 108 93	Hunting permitted
1928-29	Northern Central Southern	1 Nov - 1 Mar 15 Nov - 1 Mar 15 Nov - 15 Feb	121 107 93	Hunting permitted
1929-30 through 1932-33	Northern Central Southern	1 Nov - 15 Feb 15 Nov - 1 Feb 15 Nov - 15 Jan	107 79 62	No hunting; 10 foot rule ^b
1933-34 through 1934-35	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov - 15 Mar 1 Dec - 1 Feb 1 Dec - 15 Jan	121 63 46	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1935-36	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov - 15 Mar 1 Dec - 1 Feb 1 Dec - 15 Jan	121 63 46	No hunting; 10 foot rule

Table 11. Continued.

Season	Zone	Season dates	Season length (days)	Special Regulations
1936-37	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov - 15 Mar 1 Dec - 1 Feb 1 Dec - 15 Jan	121 63 46	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1937-38 through 1938-39	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov - 31 Jan 1 Dec - 31 Jan 1 Dec - 31 Jan	78 62 62	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1939-40 through 1942-43	Northern Central Southern	15 Nov - 31 Jan 15 Nov - 15 Jan 1 Dec - 15 Jan	78 62 46	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1943-44 through 1944-45	Statewide	15 Nov - 31 Jan	78	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1945-46 through 1948-49	Statewide	15 Nov - 15 Jan	62	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1949-50 through 1950-51	Statewide	1 Dec - 31 Jan	62	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1951-52 through 1954-55	Statewide	15 Nov - 15 Jan	62	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1955-56 through 1958-59	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 31 Dec 1 Dec - 15 Jan	47 46	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1959-60 through 1960-61	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 31 Dec 25 Nov - 15 Jan	47 52	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1961-62 through 1962-63	Northern Southern	20 Nov - 31 Dec 1 Dec - 15 Jan	42 46	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1963-64 through 1964-65	Northern Southern	20 Nov - 31 Dec 25 Nov - 10 Jan	42 47	No hunting; 10 foot rule

Table 11. Continued.

Season	Zone	Season dates	Season length (days)	Special Regulations
1965-66 through 1966-67	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 20 Dec 25 Nov - 5 Jan	36 42	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1967-68 through 1968-69	Northern Southern	16 Nov - 31 Dec 25 Nov - 5 Jan	46 42	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1969-70	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 31 Dec 25 Nov - 5 Jan	47 42	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1970-71	Northern Southern	16 Nov - 31 Dec 25 Nov - 5 Jan	46 42	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1971-72	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 31 Dec 24 Nov - 4 Jan	47 42	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1972-73	Statewide	11 Nov - 31 Jan	82	No hunting; 10 foot rule
1973-74	Statewide	10 Nov - 31 Jan	83	No hunting
1974-75	Statewide	9 Nov - 31 Jan	84	No hunting
1975-76	Northern Southern	8 Nov - 15 Jan 15 Nov - 23 Jan	69 70	No hunting
1976-77	Northern Southern	13 Nov - 6 Jan 20 Nov - 13 Jan	55 55	No hunting
1977-78 through 1978-79	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 29 Dec 25 Nov - 8 Jan	45 45	No hunting
1979-80	Northern Southern	10 Nov - 9 Dec 20 Nov - 19 Dec	30 30	No hunting
1980-81 through 1983-84	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 29 Dec 25 Nov - 8 Jan	45 45	No hunting
1984-85 through 1985-86	Northern Southern	13 Nov - 29 Dec 25 Nov - 8 Jan	47 45	No hunting

Table 11. Continued.

Season	Zone	Season dates	Season length (days)	Special Regulations
1986-87 through 1989-90	Northern Southern	15 Nov - 29 Dec 25 Nov - 8 Jan	45 45	No hunting
1990-91	Northern Southern	13 Nov - 29 Dec 25 Nov - 8 Jan	47 45	No hunting
1991-92	Northern Southern	5 Nov - 3 Jan 18 Nov - 16 Jan	60 60	No hunting

^a From 1923-24 through 1942-43 the northern zone included the area north of the southern boundaries of Henderson, Warren, Knox, Peoria, Woodford, Livingston, Kankakee, and Iroquois counties; the southern zone included the area south of the northern boundaries of Madison, Bond, Fayette, Effingham, Jasper, and Crawford counties; the central zone included the remainder of the state.

From 1955-56 through 1964-65 the northern zone included the area north of the southern boundaries of Pike, Greene, Macoupin, Montgomery, Shelby, Cumberland, and Clark counties.

From 1965-66 through 1971-72 and 1979-80 through 1991-92 the northern zone included the area north of U.S. Route 36.

From 1975-76 through 1978-79 the northern zone included the area north of U.S. Route 36 from the Indiana state line to Springfield, Route 29 from Springfield to Pekin, and Route 9 from Pekin to Dallas City, then due west to the Mississippi River.

^b No trap shall be set or placed within ten (10) feet of any muskrat house or den.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES
FURBEARER PROGRAM

SEASON OF 1992-93 WNU (FOR OFFICE USE)
FUR BUYER LICENSE NUMBER(S) () RESIDENT () NON-RESIDENT
REPORT OF RAW FURS PURCHASED

	MUSKRAT	MINK	RACCOON	OPOSSUM	RED FOX	GRAY FOX	BEAVER	SKUNK	WEASEL	COYOTE	DEER	OTHER (LIST)
1. RAW FURS BOUGHT FROM ILLINOIS HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS												
2. RAW FURS BOUGHT FROM OTHER ILLINOIS FUR BUYERS												
3. RAW FURS BOUGHT FROM OUTSIDE OF ILLINOIS												

APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS RACCOONS WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? % SIGNED
APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS OPOSSUMS WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? % FIRM NAME
APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS RED FOXES WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? % ADDRESS
APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS GRAY FOXES WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? % DATE
APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS SKUNKS WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? % ZIP CODE
APPROXIMATELY WHAT PERCENT OF THE ILLINOIS COYOTES WERE BOUGHT FROM HUNTERS? %

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!!!

The Dept. of Conservation is requesting disclosure of information that is necessary to accomplish the statutory purpose as outlined under the Wildlife Code, Chapter 61. Disclosure of this information is REQUIRED. Failure to provide any information will result in the barring of the licensee from obtaining a furbuying license the following year. This form has been approved by the State Forms Management Center.

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Figure 1. Report of raw furs purchased form used for 1991-92 season.

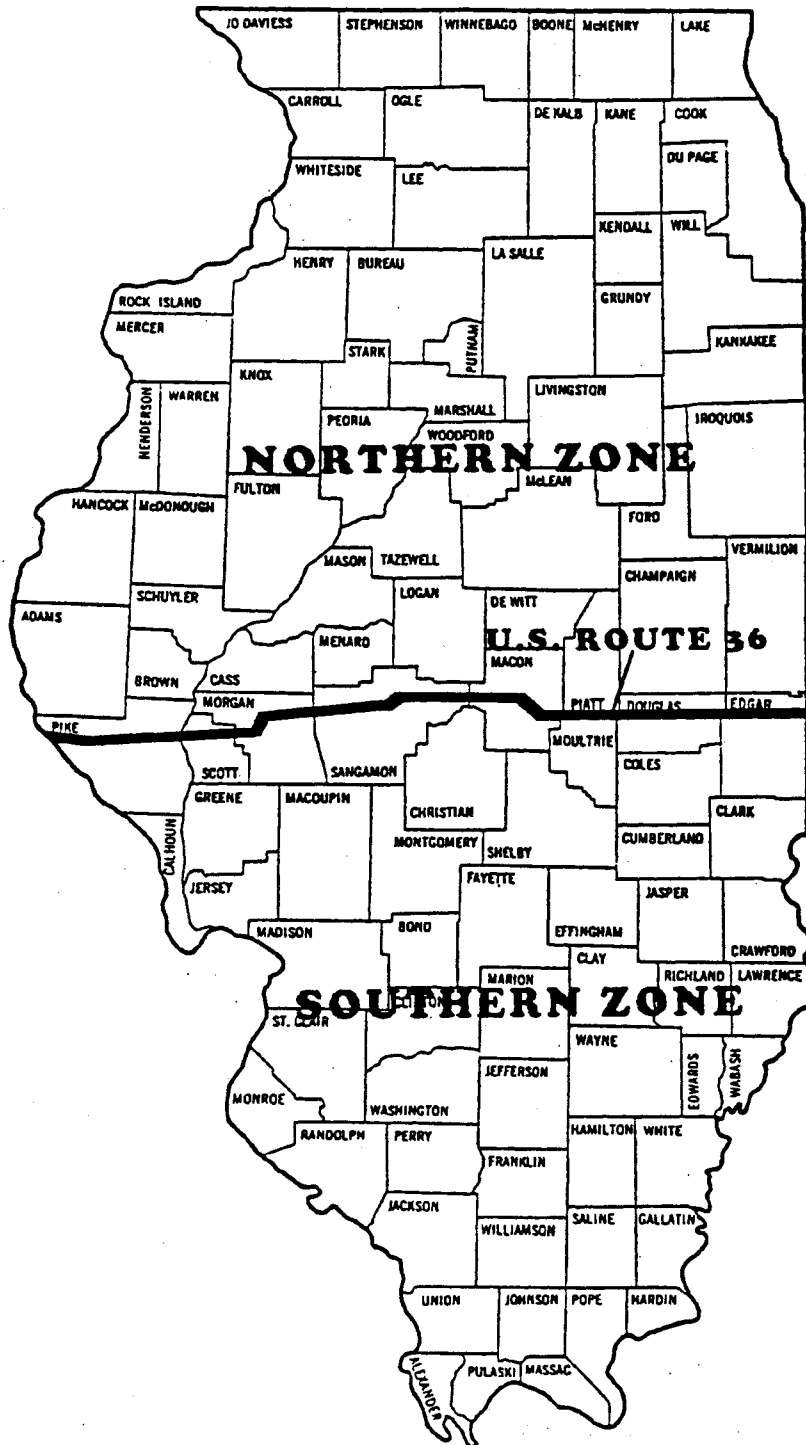


Figure 2. Furbearer management zones for the 1991-92 season.

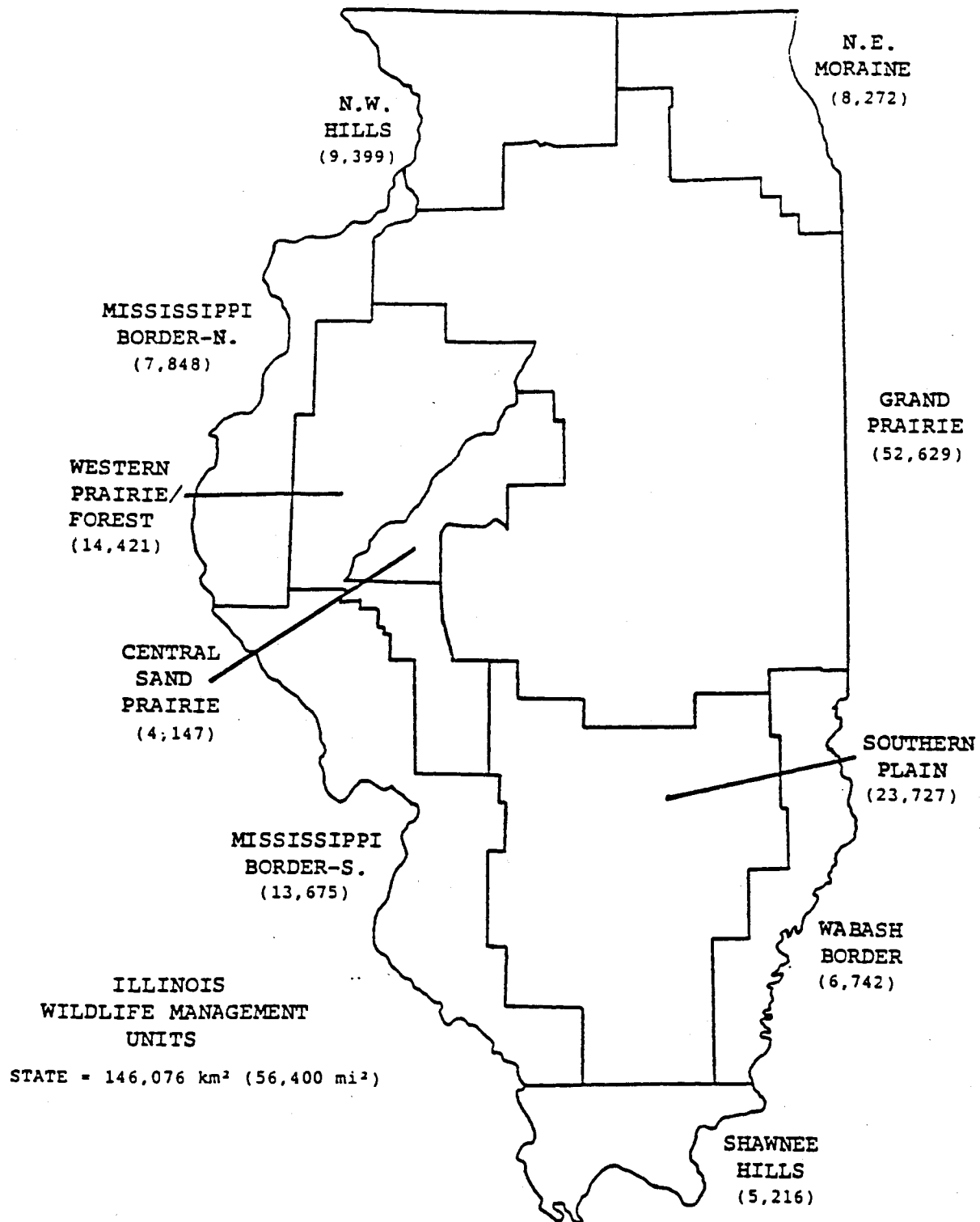


Figure 3. Area (km²) of wildlife management units in Illinois.

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